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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3756
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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6905
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4604
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3254
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7744
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1835
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5161
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1367
RHMFIS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7484

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR PREL KPAO OPRC SY

SUBJECT: Syria/Japan, Syria/Italy, Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan (6/26)

¶11. Summary: Syrian papers on June 26 reported President Asad's meeting on June 25 with Japanese First Deputy Foreign Minister Katso Hito Asano, who conveyed a message from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to President Asad on bilateral relations and means of enhancing them, particularly on the economic level. Talks also touched upon current regional developments. The Japanese delegation stressed Syria's important role in preserving stability in the region.

Papers also reported President Asad's meeting on June 25 with Lamberto Dini, Chairman of the Italian Senate Foreign Relations and Expatriates Committee. They discussed regional developments, stressing the significance of realizing a just and comprehensive peace based on international resolutions and the return of the occupied Golan, as well as the role of Italy and Europe in solving the region's issues. Dini reiterated the importance of Syria's role in cementing stability of the region. Dini also held talks with FM Mouallem and VP Shara on June 25, at which he stressed the importance of dialogue and communications with Syria to tackle regional issues.

End of summary.

¶12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad receives a message from Japanese Prime Minister Abe on boosting Syrian-Japanese relations.
President Asad discusses latest regional developments and the peace process with an Italian Senate delegation" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

"Violent clashes in Nahr al-Bared. Two Lebanese soldiers fall as martyrs in the events" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

"Lebanese opposition heads towards a national front. Lahoud: I will not allow a continuing constitutional vacuum" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/26)

"Suicide bomber targets a meeting of tribal leaders in Baghdad" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

"The Sharm el-Sheikh meeting confined to exchange of good

intentions" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

"Olmert release 250 Fateh prisoners. Abbas considers Olmert a partner" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/26)

"Paris Conference on Darfur opens in the absence of Sudan and the African Union. Indications of US and French conspiring. Beijing urges sending positive and balanced signals" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

"British Prime Minister Blair is to be appointed special envoy for the International Quartet Committee" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"A Call for Dialogue and Reconciliation"

Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/26): "Israel and the US administration are the only parties benefiting from the political crisis in the Palestinian territories. The loser is the Palestinian cause and the achievements that the Palestinian people have scored throughout their struggle to regain their rights and occupied land. The infighting and rifts in Palestinian ranks have offered a gratuitous service to the American-Israeli alliance and its plans to liquidate the Palestinian cause....

"Palestinians must be aware of the dangers of the American-Israeli role and its malicious objectives.... They must return to dialogue

and implement the understandings and agreements reached in Damascus and Mecca to achieve a solid national accord and unity...."

"To Remove Marks of their Crimes"

Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/26): "The White House theoreticians are working to expand the scope of their aggressions and interferences in the Arab region in an effort to remove the marks of their crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan....

"Developments in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon are parts of the brazen US maneuvers.... Why all the US rush to support one Palestinian party against another? Why all the US interference in Lebanese affairs, that reached the point of US Ambassador Feltman criticizing the Arab mediation effort...?"

"Arab peoples are fully aware that American hands are tampering with the region's affairs and resources....

"Stubbornness does not score victories, and everyone knows that the Bush administration has been defeated in Iraq and Afghanistan and that the attempts to expand the circle of aggression to remove the marks of the crimes will not succeed, as is obvious, especially since everyone knows what the Bush administration is doing and planning...."

"Playing on Contradictions"

Umar Jaftali, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/26): "The promises of political and financial support for the Palestinian Authority are meant to entrench Palestinian rifts and distract the Palestinians with permanent debates and marginal issues to give Olmert's government more time to evade the requirements of peace and complete its plan to Judaize Jerusalem and other areas in

the West Bank....

"Palestinians must be alert and must read well all their bitter experiences of the past and the present."

"Olmert and Bush, a Meeting of Disappointment"

Dr. Jihad Bakfaluni, a columnist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/26): "Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's visit to the United States was a big failure....

"Both Olmert and President Bush are in bad situations, with each suffering physical and psychological crises....

"The Olmert-Bush meeting was the meeting of disappointment, where the two wanted to vent the failures and setbacks that are growing more complicated and are weighing heavily on them. Iraqis will not relent in their confrontation with the American invader until he leaves in defeat and humiliation. And Palestinians will not support the trend of humiliation and capitulation, the trend that allows the Zionists to engage in killing, destruction, and violation of all taboos whenever and however they want...."

Corbin